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**Remarks to the Asia Society and the United States-China Education Foundation Board**

*October 24, 1997*

Thank you very much, Ambassador Platt. I thank the Asia Society and the U.S.-China Education Foundation for bringing us together today. I thank Senator Baucus and Congressmen Dreier, Matsui, and Roemer for being here; Secretary Albright, Ambassador Barshefsky, National Security Advisor Berger, the other distinguished officials from the State Department. And I thank especially the members of the diplomatic corps who are here, and the students. And especially let me thank two of my favorite people, Joe Duffey and Evelyn Lieberman, for the work of the Voice of America and the USIA, all that they do to promote the free flow of ideas around the world.

Next week, when President Jiang Zemin comes to Washington, it will be the first state visit by a Chinese leader to the United States for more than a decade. The visit gives us the opportunity and the responsibility to chart a course for the future that is more positive and more stable and, hopefully, more productive than our relations have been for the last few years.

China is a great country with a rich and proud history and a strong future. It will, for good or ill, play a very large role in shaping the 21st century in which the children in this audience today, children all across our country, all across China, and indeed all across the world, will live.

At the dawn of the new century, China stands at a crossroads. The direction China takes toward cooperation or conflict will profoundly affect Asia, America, and the world for decades. The emergence of a China as a power that is stable, open, and nonaggressive, that embraces free markets, political pluralism, and the rule of law, that works with us to build a secure international order, that kind of China, rather than a China turned inward and confrontational, is deeply in the interests of the American people.

Of course, China will choose its own destiny. Yet by working with China and expanding areas of cooperation, dealing forthrightly with our differences, we can advance fundamental American interests and values.

First, the United States has a profound interest in promoting a peaceful, prosperous, and stable world. Our task will be much easier if China is a part of that process, not only playing by the rules of international behavior but helping to write and enforce them.

China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Its support was crucial for peacekeeping efforts in Cambodia and building international mandates to reverse Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and restore democracy to Haiti. As a neighbor of India and Pakistan, China will influence whether these great democracies move toward responsible cooperation both with each other and with China.

From the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, China's need for a reliable and efficient supply of energy to fuel its growth can make it a force for stability in these strategically critical regions. Next week, President Jiang and I will discuss our visions of the future and the kind of strategic relationship we must have to promote cooperation, not conflict.

Second, the United States has a profound interest in peace and stability in Asia. Three times this century, Americans have fought and died in Asian wars—37,000 Americans still patrol the cold war's last frontier, on the Korean DMZ. Territorial disputes that could flare into crises affecting America require us to maintain a strong American security presence in Asia. We want China to be a powerful force for security and cooperation there.

China has helped us convince North Korea to freeze and ultimately end its dangerous nuclear program. Just imagine how much more dangerous that volatile peninsula would be today if North Korea, reeling from food shortages, with a million soldiers encamped 27 miles from Seoul, had continued this nuclear program.

China also agreed to take part in the four-party peace talks that President Kim and I proposed with North Korea, the only realistic

avenue to a lasting peace. And China is playing an increasingly constructive role in Southeast Asia by working with us and the members of ASEAN to advance our shared interests in economic and political security.

Next week I'll discuss with President Jiang the steps we can take together to advance the peace process in Korea. We'll look at ways to strengthen our military-to-military contacts, decreasing the chances of miscalculation and broadening America's contacts with the next generation of China's military leaders. And I will reiterate to President Jiang America's continuing support for our one China policy, which has allowed democracy to flourish in Taiwan and Taiwan's relationship with the PRC to grow more stable and prosperous. The Taiwan question can only be settled by the Chinese themselves peacefully.

Third, the United States has a profound interest in keeping weapons of mass destruction and other sophisticated weaponry out of unstable regions and away from rogue states and terrorists. In the 21st century, many of the threats to our security will come not from great power conflict but from states that defy the international community and violent groups seeking to undermine peace, stability, and democracy. China is already a nuclear power with increasingly sophisticated industrial and technological capabilities. We need its help to prevent dangerous weapons from falling into the wrong hands.

For years, China stood outside the major international arms control regimes. Over the past decade, it has made important and welcome decisions to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and to respect key provisions of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Last year at the United Nations, I was proud to be the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. China's Foreign Minister was the second leader to do so.

China has lived up to its pledge not to assist unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in third countries, and it is developing a system of export controls to prevent the transfer or sale of technology for weapons of mass destruction.

But China still maintains some troubling weapons supply relationships. At the summit, I will discuss with President Jiang further steps we hope China will take to end or limit some of these supply relationships and to strengthen and broaden its export control system. And I will make the case to him that these steps are, first and foremost, in China's interest, because the spread of dangerous weapons and technology would increase instability near China's own borders.

Fourth, the United States has profound interest in fighting drug-trafficking and international organized crime. Increasingly, smugglers and criminals are taking advantage of China's vast territory and its borders with 15 nations to move drugs and weapons, aliens, and the proceeds of illegal activities from one point in Asia to another or from Asia to Europe.

China and the United States already are cooperating closely on alien smuggling, and China has taken a tough line against narco-trafficking, a threat to its children as well as our own. Next week I will propose to President Jiang that our law enforcement communities intensify their efforts together.

Fifth, the United States has a profound interest in making global trade and investment as free, fair, and open as possible. Over the past 5 years, trade has produced more than one-third of America's economic growth. If we are to continue generating good jobs and higher incomes in our country when we are just 4 percent of the world's population, we must continue to sell more to the other 96 percent. One of the best ways to do that is to bring China more fully into the world's trading system. With a quarter of the world's population and its fastest growing economy, China could and should be a magnet for our goods and services.

Even though American exports to China now are at an all-time high, so, too, is our trade deficit. In part, this is due to the strength of the American economy and to the fact that many products we used to buy in other Asian countries now are manufactured in China. But clearly, an important part of the problem remains lack of access to China's markets. We strongly support China's admission into the World Trade Organization. But in turn, China must dramatically improve ac-

cess for foreign goods and services. We should be able to compete fully and fairly in China's marketplace, just as China competes in our own.

Tearing down trade barriers also is good for China and for the growth of China's neighbors and, therefore, for the stability and future of Asia. Next week, President Jiang and I will discuss steps China must take to join the WTO and assume its rightful place in the world economy.

Finally, the United States has a profound interest in ensuring that today's progress does not come at tomorrow's expense. Greenhouse gas emissions are leading to climate change. China is the fastest growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and we are the biggest greenhouse gas emitter. Soon, however, China will overtake the United States and become the largest contributor. Already, pollution has made respiratory disease the number one health problem for China's people. Last March, when he visited China, Vice President Gore launched a joint forum with the Chinese on the environment and development so that we can work with China to pursue growth and protect the environment at the same time.

China has taken some important steps to deal with its need for more energy and cleaner air. Next week, President Jiang and I will talk about the next steps China can take to combat climate change. It is a global problem that must have a global solution that cannot come without China's participation as well. We also will talk about what American companies and technology can do to support China in its efforts to reduce air pollution and increase clean energy production.

Progress in each of these areas will draw China into the institutions and arrangements that are setting the ground rules for the 21st century, the security partnerships, the open trade arrangements, the arms control regime, the multinational coalitions against terrorism, crime, and drugs, the commitments to preserve the environment and to uphold human rights. This is our best hope, to secure our own interests and values and to advance China's in the historic transformation that began 25 years ago when China reopened to the world.

As we all know, the transformation already has produced truly impressive results. Twenty-five years ago, China stood apart from and closed to the international community. Now, China is a member of more than 1,000 international organizations, from the International Civil Aviation Organization to the International Fund for Agricultural Development. It has moved from the 22d largest trading nation to the 11th. It is projected to become the second largest trader, after the United States, by 2020. And today, 40,000 young Chinese are studying here in the United States, with hundreds of thousands more living and learning in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

China's economic transformation has been even more radical. Market reforms have spurred more than two decades of unprecedented growth, and the decision at the recently ended 15th Party Congress to sell off most all of China's big, state-owned industries promises to keep China moving toward a market economy. The number of people living in poverty has dropped from 250 million to 58 million, even as China's population has increased by nearly 350 million. Per capital income in the cities has jumped 550 percent in just the past decade.

As China has opened its economy, its people have enjoyed greater freedom of movement and choice of employment, better schools and housing. Today, most Chinese enjoy a higher standard of living than at any time in China's modern history. But as China has opened economically, political reform has lagged behind.

Frustration in the West turned into condemnation after the terrible events in Tiananmen Square. Now, nearly a decade later, one of the great questions before the community of democracies is how to pursue the broad and complex range of our interests with China while urging and supporting China to move politically as well as economically into the 21st century. The great question for China is how to preserve stability, promote growth, and increase its influence in the world, while making room for the debate and the dissent that are a part of the fabric of all truly free and vibrant societies. The answer to those questions must begin

with an understanding of the crossroads China has reached.

As China discards its old economic order, the scope and sweep of change has rekindled historic fears of chaos and disintegration. In return, Chinese leaders have worked hard to mobilize support, legitimize power, and hold the country together, which they see is essential to restoring the greatness of their nation and its rightful influence in the world. In the process, however, they have stifled political dissent to a degree and in ways that we believe are fundamentally wrong, even as freedom from want, freedom of movement, and local elections have increased.

This approach has caused problems within China and in its relationship to the United States. Chinese leaders believe it is necessary to hold the nation together, to keep it growing, to keep moving toward its destiny. But it will become increasingly difficult to maintain the closed political system in an ever-more open economy and society.

China's economic growth has made it more and more dependent on the outside world for investment, markets, and energy. Last year it was the second largest recipient of foreign direct investment in the world. These linkages bring with them powerful forces for change. Computers and the Internet, fax machines and photocopiers, modems and satellites all increase the exposure to people, ideas, and the world beyond China's borders. The effect is only just beginning to be felt.

Today more than a billion Chinese have access to television, up from just 10 million two decades ago. Satellite dishes dot the landscape. They receive dozens of outside channels, including Chinese language services of CNN, Star TV, and Worldnet. Talk radio is increasingly popular and relatively unregulated in China's 1,000 radio stations. And 70 percent of China's students regularly listen to the Voice of America.

China's 2,200 newspapers, up from just 42 three decades ago, and more than 7,000 magazines and journals are more open in content. A decade ago, there were 50,000 mobile phones in China; now there are more than 7 million. The Internet already has 150,000 accounts in China, with more than a million expected to be on-line by the year 2000. The

more ideas and information spread, the more people will expect to think for themselves, express their own opinions, and participate. And the more that happens, the harder it will be for their government to stand in their way.

Indeed, greater openness is profoundly in China's own interest. If welcomed, it will speed economic growth, enhance the world influence of China, and stabilize society. Without the full freedom to think, question, to create, China will be at a distinct disadvantage, competing with fully open societies in the information age where the greatest source of national wealth is what resides in the human mind.

China's creative potential is truly staggering. The largest population in the world is not yet among its top 15 patent powers. In an era where these human resources are what really matters, a country that holds its people back cannot achieve its full potential.

Our belief that, over time, growing interdependence would have a liberalizing effect in China does not mean in the meantime we should or we can ignore abuses in China of human rights or religious freedom. Nor does it mean that there is nothing we can do to speed the process of liberalization.

Americans share a fundamental conviction that people everywhere have the right to be treated with dignity, to give voice to their opinion, to choose their own leaders, to worship as they please. From Poland to South Africa, from Haiti to the Philippines, the democratic saga of the last decade proves that these are not American rights or Western rights or developed world rights, they are the birthrights of every human being enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Those who fight for human rights and against religious persecution, at the risk of their jobs, their freedom, even their lives, find strength through knowledge that they are not alone, that the community of democracies stands with them. The United States, therefore, must and will continue to stand up for human rights, to speak out against their abuse in China or anywhere else in the world. To do otherwise would run counter to everything we stand for as Americans.

Over the past year, our State Department's annual human rights report again pulled no punches on China. We cosponsored a resolution critical of China's human rights record in Geneva, even though many of our allies had abandoned the effort. We continue to speak against the arrest of dissidents and for a resumed dialog with the Dalai Lama, on behalf of the people and the distinct culture and unique identity of the people of Tibet, not their political independence but their uniqueness.

We established Radio Free Asia. We are working with Congress to expand its broadcast and to support civil society and the rule of law programs in China. We continue to pursue the problem of prison labor, and we regularly raise human rights in all our high-level meetings with the Chinese.

We do this in the hope of a dialog. And in dialog we must also admit that we in America are not blameless in our social fabric: Our crime rate is too high; too many of our children are still killed with guns; too many of our streets are still riddled with drugs. We have things to learn from other societies as well and problems we have to solve. And if we expect other people to listen to us about the problems they have, we must be prepared to listen to them about the problems we have.

This pragmatic policy of engagement, of expanding our areas of cooperation with China while confronting our differences openly and respectfully, this is the best way to advance our fundamental interests and our values and to promote a more open and free China.

I know there are those who disagree. They insist that China's interests and America's are inexorably in conflict. They do not believe the Chinese system will continue to evolve in a way that elevates not only human material condition but the human spirit. They, therefore, believe we should be working harder to contain or even to confront China before it becomes even stronger.

I believe this view is wrong. Isolation of China is unworkable, counterproductive, and potentially dangerous. Military, political, and economic measures to do such a thing would find little support among our allies around the world and, more importantly, even

among Chinese themselves working for greater liberty. Isolation would encourage the Chinese to become hostile and to adopt policies of conflict with our own interests and values. It will eliminate, not facilitate, cooperation on weapons proliferation. It would hinder, not help, our efforts to foster stability in Asia. It would exacerbate, not ameliorate, the plight of dissidents. It would close off, not open up, one of the world's most important markets. It would make China less, not more, likely to play by the rules of international conduct and to be a part of an emerging international consensus.

As always, America must be prepared to live and flourish in a world in which we are at odds with China. But that is not the world we want. Our objective is not containment and conflict. It is cooperation. We will far better serve our interests and our principles if we work with a China that shares that objective with us.

Thirty years ago, President Richard Nixon, then a citizen campaigning for the job I now hold, called for a strategic change in our policy toward China. Taking the long view, he said, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations. There is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able people to live in angry isolation.

Almost two decades ago, President Carter normalized relations with China, recognizing the wisdom of that statement. And over the past two and a half decades, as China has emerged from isolation, tensions with the West have decreased; cooperation has increased; prosperity has spread to more of China's people. The progress was a result of China's decision to play a more constructive role in the world and to open its economy. It was supported by a farsighted American policy that made clear to China we welcome its emergence as a great nation.

Now, America must stay on that course of engagement. By working with China and making our differences clear where necessary, we can advance our interests and our values and China's historic transformation into a nation whose greatness is defined as much by its future as its past.

Change may not come as quickly as we would like, but, as our interests are long-

term, so must our policies be. We have an opportunity to build a new century in which China takes its rightful place as a full and strong partner in the community of nations, working with the United States to advance peace and prosperity, freedom and security for both our people and for all the world. We have to take that chance.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the auditorium at the Voice of America. In his remarks, he referred to Nicholas Platt, president, The Asia Society; and President Jiang Zemin of China.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **October 18**

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled from San Carlos de Bariloche to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Later, they returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

#### **October 21**

The President announced his intention to nominate William J. Lynn III to be Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard M. McGahey to serve as Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cyril Kent McGuire to serve as Assistant Secretary of Educational Research and Improvement at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert McNamara, Jr., to serve as General Counsel at the Central Intelligence Agency.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daryl L. Jones to be Secretary of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to appoint former Representative John Bryant as head of the U.S. delegation to the International Telecommunication Union's 1997 World Radiocommunications Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, with the personal rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sam W. Brown with the personal rank of Ambassador during his service as the head of the U.S. delegation to the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe's Ministerial Preparatory Conferences in Vienna, Austria.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert L. Baxter as a member of the Advisory Committee to the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection.

#### **October 22**

In the afternoon, the President met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Charles Horsley as Associate Deputy Secretary and Director of Intermodalism at the Department of Transportation.

The White House announced the President's intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters: Charles Benton, Frank Blythe, Peggy Charren, Harold C. Crump, Frank Cruz, Robert Decherd, Barry Diller, William Duhamel, Rob Glaser, Jim Goodman, Paul La Camera, Richard Masur, Newton Minow, Shelby Scott, Gigi Sohn, Karen Peltz Strauss, Cass R. Sunstein, Lois Jean White, and James Yee.

The White House announced that the President received the final report of the Presidential Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection on October 20.

#### **October 23**

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary Beth West for the rank of Ambassador to be Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Space.